

1 Remarks

2 Amendments to the claims

3 New claims 25, 26 and 27 have been added, as indicated above. Support for
4 new claims 25-27 is found at least on page 19, lines 4-7 of the specification as originally
5 filed. No new matter has been introduced by way of new claims 25-27.
6

7 Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

8 Claims 1-4, 6-13, 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being
9 unpatentable over the admitted prior art (Applicant's background section) over any one
10 of U.S. Patent No. 3,664,913 ("Olson"), JP 0805287 ("Osogoshi et al."), or GB 1289387
11 ("Sendor et al.").

12 The Applicant respectfully disagrees that claims 1-4, 6-13, 15 and 16 are obvious
13 as asserted above.

14 As a starting point, MPEP 706.02(j) states:

15 "[t]o establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria
16 must be met. **First**, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in
17 the cited references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to
18 one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine the
19 reference teachings. **Second**, there must be a reasonable expectation of
20 success. **Finally**, the prior art reference (or references when combined)
21 must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion
22 to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of
23 success must both be found in the prior art and not based on applicant's
24 disclosure." (Emphasis added.)

25 As set forth in the Applicant's specification, the motivation for developing the
methods and apparatus of the present invention are two-fold:

1 1) Protecting the integrity of print or imaging underlying a transparent coating
2 against intrusive prior art binding methods (such as stapling, stitching, etc.) or damage
3 from environmental elements (moisture, gasses, etc.); and

4 2) Facilitating the fusing or partial fusing of at least one sheet of media to another
5 sheet of media *after* the printing and the protective coating have been sequentially
6 respectively provided.

7 Accordingly, one seeking to solve the problem addressed by the Applicant's
8 claimed invention would not consider references that pertain to any one or more of:

- 9 - any coating that is applied to sheet media prior to imaging of the media; or
10 - imaging that is not protected by a transparent overlying coating.

11
12 Arguments in support of Claims 1-4, 6-13, 15-16 and 25-26

13 With regard to Olson, the teachings therein provide for an opaque, heat-fusible
14 coating composition, that is applied to paper or another substrate prior to any imaging
15 thereon, wherein the coating composition must be of appropriate porosity (and other
16 characteristics) so as to accommodate the retention and drying of ink (Abstract; Col. 2,
17 lines 51-57; Col. 3, lines 70-75; and Col. 4, lines 39-45 of Olson).

18 Olson fails to provide any motivation or reasonable expectation of success for
19 applying a transparent protective coating overlying an image-bearing sheet of media,
20 wherein the transparently coated and *protected* sheet of media is then energy-bindable
21 to another sheet of media. Quite simply, Olson is directed to providing a different
22 solution to a different problem – namely, providing a type of coated, heat-fusible sheet
23 media that is capable of retaining and drying (a later applied) ink or other liquid imaging
24 media.

25 Therefore, one of skill in the relevant art would not consult Olson when faced with
solving the problems addressed by the present invention, as Olson fails to provide any
motivation toward, or reasonable expectation of success for, the invention as

1 respectively recited by instant claims 1 and 10. Thus, the respective 103(a) rejections of
2 claims 1 and 10 are unsupportable under Olson in view of the requirements of MPEP
3 706.02(j).

4 Regarding Osogoshi et al., the reference provides for a coating that “makes
5 adhesives and a pigment a principle component” (Osogoshi et al. translation, ¶ 0010,
6 emphasis added); that “the aforementioned coating constituent five to 20% ... of a
7 pigment” (Id.); and “[a]s a pigment of the coating constituent used for this invention, well
8 known pigments for coating, such as whiting, ... is chosen suitably, and is combined and
9 used.” (Id., at ¶ 0012). Therefore, Osogoshi et al. is directed toward the use of
10 non-transparent coatings applied to paper (or other media) prior to any imaging thereof.

11 Furthermore, the coatings of Osogoshi et al. are concerned with the absorption,
12 retention and drying of ink, as well as the nature of the pigment(s) used. This is evident
13 as Osogoshi et al recites: “However, the for [which is stuck by pressure] being used here
14 has the problem of needing the special process for printing such special ink, when it is
15 necessary to select adhesive good ink exceptionally.” (Id., at ¶ 0004).

16 Osogoshi et al. fail to provide any motivation or reasonable expectation of
17 success for applying a transparent protective coating overlying an image-bearing sheet
18 of media, wherein the transparently coated and *protected* sheet of media is then energy-
19 bindable to another sheet of media. Osogoshi et al. is directed to providing a different
20 solution to a different problem – namely, providing a coated, heat-fusible sheet media
21 that is capable of retaining and drying (a later applied) ink or other liquid imaging media.

22 One of skill in the art would not consult Osogoshi et al. when faced with the
23 problems addressed by the present invention, as Osogoshi et al. fail to provide any
24 motivation toward, or reasonable expectation of success for, the invention as
25 respectively recited by instant claims 1 and 10. Thus, the respective 103(a) rejections of
claims 1 and 10 are unsupportable under Olson in view of the requirements of MPEP
706.02(j).

1 Sendor et al. is directed to sheets of media (i.e., paper), to which a layer of
2 thermoplastic resin is applied, so that individual sheets of (thereafter) printable media
3 can be thermally “welded” together (Page 3, lines 21-24; Page 1, lines 59-58; etc. of
4 Sendor et al.).

5 In fact, the bulk of the disclosure by Sendor et al. is directed to various methods
6 and apparatus for performing a “welding” (i.e., page joining) function, wherein Sendor et
7 al. provide little teaching as to the formulation of the thermoplastic resin. The only
8 statement provided with Sendor et al. is that the coating results in “printable and
9 weldable paper” (Claim 1 of Sendor et al.). As a result, Sendor et al. inherently teaches
10 that any printing or imaging occurs after the coating of Sendor et al. is applied to the
11 paper (or other media). In any case, Sendor et al. is completely silent in regard to: 1)
12 protecting print or imaging underlying a transparent coating against intrusive binding or
13 damage from environmental elements; or 2) the fusing or partial fusing of at least one
14 sheet of media to another sheet of media after the printing and the protective coating
15 have been sequentially provided, respectively.

16 Sendor et al. fail to provide any motivation or reasonable expectation of success
17 for applying a transparent protective coating overlying an image-bearing sheet of media,
18 wherein the transparently coated and *protected* sheet of media is then energy-bindable
19 to another sheet of media. Sendor et al. is directed to solving a different problem –
20 namely, providing a coated, heat-fusible sheet media that is capable of being printed
21 upon at some later time.

22 Therefore, one of skill in the art would not consult Sendor et al. in order to solve
23 the problems addressed by the present invention, as Sendor et al. fail to provide any
24 motivation toward, or reasonable expectation of success for, the invention as
25 respectively recited by instant claims 1 and 10. Thus, the respective 103(a) rejections of
claims 1 and 10 are unsupportable under Olson in view of the requirements of MPEP
706.02(j).

1 The Examiner is further referred to MPEP 2143.01, which recites as follows:

2 "If [a] proposed modification would render the prior art unsuitable
3 for its intended purpose, then there is no suggestion or motivation to make
4 the proposed modification." *In re Gordon*, 733 F.2d 900, 221 USPQ 1125
5 (Fed. Cir. 1984)

6 In this case, if any one or more of the respectively cited references (i.e., Olson,
7 Osogoshi et al. and Sendor et al.) were combined with the teachings of admitted prior
8 art, either of two outcomes is inescapably realized:

9 A) If the admitted prior art were modified in view of any of the cited references,
10 the result would be a heat-fusible lamination that *opaquely obscures* the underlying
11 imaging/text, wherein the underlying imaging/text is now *vulnerable to damaging*
12 *environmental elements due to the inherent ink-porosity of the lamination*; or

13 B) If the cited prior art were modified in view of the admitted prior art, the logical
14 result would be a transparent, heat-fusible coating applied to the sheet media *prior to*
15 *any imaging*, wherein a laser or xerographic imaging process would subject the entire
16 coating to a premature activation of the heat-fusible characteristic. Such premature
17 activation of the heat-fusible coating would result in distortion of the substantially
18 *overlying* imaging and/or gumming of, or damage to, the imaging system.

19 In either of the outcomes A) or B) above, the combining of the admitted art with
20 the Examiner-cited references results in the rendering of either prior art (Examiner-cited
21 or admitted) unsuitable for its intended purpose. Such an unsuitable modification of any
22 reference is impermissible in view of MPEP 2143.01.

23 In summary, any 103 rejection that requires a combination of teachings of any
24 one of Olson, Osogoshi et al. or Sendor et al. with the admitted prior art, so as to arrive
25 at the present invention as recited by either of instant claims 1 and 10, is unsupportable
in view of the requirements of MPEP 706.02(j) and MPEP 2143.01.

1 In view of the foregoing, the Applicant asserts that instant independent claims 1
2 and 10 are allowable. It is axiomatic that claims 2-4, 6-9 and 25 that respectively
3 depend from claim 1, and claims 11-13, 15-16 and 26 that respectively depend from
4 claim 10, are also allowable by virtue of their dependence from respective allowable
5 base claims.

6 Arguments in support of Claim 27

7 In regard to new independent claim 27, that claim includes the following
8 teachings and limitations:

9 A method of binding a plurality of sheets into a bound sheet stack,
10 comprising:

11 providing a first sheet and a second sheet;

12 printing on at least a portion of the first or second sheet, wherein
13 the printing includes thermally fusing an imaging media to the first or
14 second sheet;

15 following printing on the first or second sheet, applying a
16 transparent protective coating to at least a portion of the first or second
17 sheet; [...]

18 following overlaying the first and second sheets, applying a thermal
19 binding energy to a binding region defined on the first and second sheets
20 to thereby bind the sheets into a sheet stack, the binding region
21 comprising a selected area of the transparent protective coating on the at
22 least one sheet, the selected area being in contact with the other sheet.

23 (Emphasis added.)

24 As argued above, no one or combination of Olson, Osogoshi et al. and/or Sendor
25 et al. teaches or suggests a respectively coated media that is in any way suitable for use
in a laser printing or other electrophotographic imaging process, wherein a toner or
similar imaging media is thermally fused to a paper or other sheet media. This is due to

1 the fact that, in accordance with any of the Examiner-cited references, such a thermal
2 image-fusing step – which *must* be performed *after* the respective coating is applied to
3 the underlying media – would prematurely soften (i.e., melt) the fusible coating of that
4 media (i.e., paper). Such a softening of the coating would lead to gumming of, or
5 damage to, the image-fusing apparatus and/or other associated components.

6 Thus, the teachings of Olson, Osogoshi et al. and Sendor et al. are respectively
7 unsuitable for use in a laser printing or other electrophotographic imaging process.
8 Therefore, none of the respectively cited references to Olson, Osogoshi et al., or Sendor
9 et al., provides any motivation toward, or reasonable expectation of success for, the
10 invention as recited by new claim 27. Therefore, new claim 27 is allowable.

11
12 Summary

13 The Applicant believes that this response constitutes a full and complete
14 response to the Office Action. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests
15 reconsideration of claims 1-4, 6-13, 15 and 16, as well examination on the merits of new
16 claims 25-27, in favor of timely allowance.

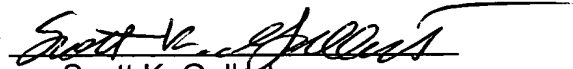
17 The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the below-signed
18 representative if the Examiner believes this will facilitate prosecution toward
19 allowance of the claims.

20 Respectfully submitted,

21 Roland BOSS

22 Date: October 12, 2004

23 By



24 Scott K. Gallert
Agent for Applicant
Reg. No. 51,715
Phone: (509) 468-3229